

Sakharov Human Rights Prize, 2026

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Awards

Why in news?

The International Criminal Court and its officials won the EU's 2026 Sakharov human rights prize, announced by the European Parliament President.

- **Sakharov Prize** - Named after Soviet physicist and political dissident Andrei Sakharov, the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought was established in 1988.
- **Awarded by** - European Union (EU) annually by Parliament to individuals or organisations.
- **Monetary Award** - €50,000 along with a diploma and official citation
- **Purpose** - It honours individuals, groups, or organizations that make an outstanding contribution to defending
 - The defence of human and fundamental rights, in particular freedom of expression,
 - The safeguarding of minority rights,
 - Respect for international law,
 - The development of democracy and
 - The defence of the rule of law.
- **2026 award**
- **Award ceremony** - The award ceremony for the 2026 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought will take place in December in Strasbourg, during Parliament's plenary session.
- **Recipient & Reason** - The ICC and its personnel, including judges, prosecutors, and investigators by recognising their important work in upholding international law and justice.
- **ICC** - ICC is a permanent, independent international tribunal established to prosecute individuals charged with the gravest crimes of concern to the international community.
- **Headquarter** - The Hague, Netherlands.
- The ICC is governed by an international treaty known as the Rome Statute (adopted in 1998, entered into force on July 1, 2002).
- **ICC's work** - It investigates and tries individuals (rather than states) for four core crimes - genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and the crime of aggression.
- The Court is a crucial actor in the global fight to end impunity, and through international criminal justice, it aims to hold those responsible accountable for their crimes and to help prevent these crimes from happening again.
- **Membership** - As of 2026, the ICC has 124 member states (plus the Palestinian territories). Notable non-members include the United States, China, Russia, Israel, and

India.

- As a ***court of last resort***, it seeks to complement national courts.
- **Geopolitical Tensions** – The award comes amid escalating pressure and US sanctions targeting the ICC and its leadership under the administration of Donald Trump, following the court's issuance of high-profile arrest warrants.

References

1. [European Parliament | ICC and its officials awarded the Sakharov Prize](#)
2. [Reuters | International Criminal Court wins EU's 2026 Sakharov prize](#)

